

Academic Strategies

Reading: Unit 1

There are three items to complete in this Reading area:

1. Reading
2. Challenge Activity
3. Powerful Words for a Powerful Vocabulary

I. Reading

Introduction

This week, you will review the Syllabus (your guide to the course) and learn how to navigate and use the many features of this online classroom. This is designed to help you become familiar with course policies, procedures, and expectations. Now that you are in an academic program, it is time to start practicing good writing. You do not have to be perfect, but you should strive to be a clear and professional communicator. The Reading, found below, will cover:

- Communicating Online — Learning the correct way to write while attending an online class.
- General Guidelines to Communicating Online — Understanding "Netiquette."
- General Class Information — Find out what day your class starts and how to get help.

Navigation for your Class

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Success

During this unit, you will introduce yourself to your instructor and classmates. A strong support system is one of the keys to success. Rest assured you are not alone in this process. Your knowledgeable and talented instructor cares deeply about making the classroom experience both valuable and enjoyable for you. Do not give up. This is the first and probably the most important challenge you will meet during your time here at the University.

Be Patient

Be patient and give yourself the time you need to process all of this new information. Studies show that if you can make it through your first 3 weeks, you greatly increase your chances of getting that degree. This is not much time at all when you consider that the benefits of a higher education will last you the rest of your life. If you remember the reasons you began this wonderful journey, it will help to motivate you to continue. Throughout the course you will be looking at various strategies that will help you overcome obstacles and reach your goals.

Why Earn a Degree?

Earning a degree can lead to multiple practical and emotional benefits. Here are some quotes from students on the benefits of having a college degree.

“Having a degree opens doors. Without that piece of paper, your options are limited, even with the experience.”

“I have been turned down for many jobs this year because I do not have a college degree.”

“I could provide a better life for my family.”

“I feel like I had accomplished something, and I would feel more confident.”

Additional Motivation

Just in case you need additional motivation to jump in and get started, it might be helpful to also look at the monetary value of a university education.

According to the U.S. Census bureau, a bachelor’s degree can be worth an extra \$17,524.00 a year more than an Associate’s degree.

Unemployment rates and earnings by educational attainment, 2016

Educational attainment	Unemployment rate (%)	Median usual weekly earnings (\$)
Doctoral degree	1.6	1,664
Professional degree	1.6	1,745
Master’s degree	2.4	1,380
Bachelor’s degree	2.7	1,156
Associate’s degree	3.6	819
Some college, no degree	4.4	756
High school diploma	5.2	692
Less than a high school diploma	7.4	504
Total	4.0	885

Note: Data are for persons age 25 and over. Earnings are for full-time wage and salary workers.
Source: Current Population Survey, U.S. Department of Labor, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

Retrieved from: https://www.bls.gov/emp/ep_table_001.htm

Communicating Online

The Do's and Don'ts of communicating online.

With friends and family, it is fun to use Internet slang such as smileys :) and abbreviations such as LOL (laughing aloud) but as a professional you need to consider that anything you write can be forwarded to anyone else. You have to be careful what you say, and need to be more formal in your approach to school and career.

Now that you are in an academic program, it is time to start practicing good writing. You do not have to be perfect, but you should strive to be a clear and professional communicator

Netiquette

The word “netiquette” is a combination of two words: network and etiquette.

There are no World Wide Web rules, and so the internet can be a pretty hectic place, but Virginia Shea, the author of *Netiquette*, identified 10 Core Rules of Netiquette for communicating in cyberspace.

1) Remember the human: This is considered the “golden rule” of online communication. Always try to remember that there is a person on the receiving end of your online communications. If you would not say something while looking a person in the eye, do not say it in electronic form. Be kind.

2) Adhere to the same standards of behavior online that you follow in real life: This is certainly a common sense rule. Your behavioral standards should be the same whether you are online or offline.

3) Know where you are in cyberspace: Cyberspace is actually a virtual community. Just as in your own community area, certain behaviors are not acceptable in certain places. Respect each virtual community area by acting in a way that is acceptable.

4) Respect other people's time and bandwidth: Try not to waste other people's time by sending information that they really do not need.

5) Make yourself look good online: Your online presence is not based on how you look; it's based on how you present yourself through your writing. Strive to make yourself look good by expressing yourself clearly and professionally.

6) Share expert knowledge: You may very likely have something valuable to share, so when the opportunity presents itself make an effort to share your knowledge.

7) Help keep flame wars under control: Avoid taking part in unnecessary exchanges of angry electronic messages.

8) Respect other people's privacy: Avoid sharing information that is not intended to be shared. Additionally, it's a good practice to consider all electronic forms of communication private. Do not read emails that are not addressed to you.

9) Do not abuse your power: If you are in a position that allows you to access information for professional reasons, do not use your access for any other reasons. Be honest.

10) Be forgiving of other people's mistakes: Try to avoid criticizing people who are still learning the basics of communicating electronically.

Netiquette Do's

- Write out all words (type "you" instead of "u") and use appropriate capitalizations.
- Always capitalize the pronoun I.
- Explain yourself clearly.

Don'ts

- Do not use smileys (also called emoticons).
- Avoid acronyms. Not everyone will know what the acronyms mean and this can block the flow of communication.
- For example, not everyone knows what ROTFL (rolling on the floor laughing) means.
- Do not use all capital letters when you type. The use of all capitals in text is considered SHOUTING!

Work Week

The Academic Week begins on Wednesdays and ends on Tuesday nights at midnight, Eastern Time.

Time Zones: Seminars are listed in Eastern Time zone. If you are not sure how that works for you, visit the U.S. official time website at www.time.gov

Grades: Keep in mind that grades are not automatically generated for Discussion Boards, Seminars, or Assignments. Instructors must look these items over before assigning points, and may not post any grades for a unit until a few days after the due date.

Weekly Units: Focus on completing Assignments during the time scheduled for each weekly unit. Most instructors will not accept, or grade, work that is submitted early; many will post new information on Wednesdays when each new unit officially begins, so it is best to wait until all of the information is available.

Empowered Learning

Review the foundations of critical thinking and read about essential qualities of empowered students.

Critical Thinking in Three Words

According to Benjamin Bloom (1956) and David A. Sousa (1997) critical thinking entails steps that lead to your unique creativity. When you set aside emotional/reactive thinking your critical thinking skills can grow with consistent motivation allowing you to be a better creative problem solver.

Sousa's newly revised Bloom's Taxonomy explains the importance of learning through analysis/research, evaluation, and creativity as it has evolved with the vast discovery of knowledge of the learning brain during and since the publication of "Decade of The Brain" in the 1990s (Sousa, 2007)

Analysis/Research — In all instances, you look at information with a curious eye. You both consciously, or subconsciously, compare and contrast that information with your background knowledge to help you determine a motivation for further learning. It is in your best interest to consciously investigate information with which you are working. In order to accomplish this in the most complete fashion, you should further research information. This gives you the background you need to move up to the next level of critical thinking.

Evaluation — In this level you make a judgment call, a recommendation, a decision on a proceeding, and you base your moves on the knowledge that you have gathered from the analysis/research level. You can confidently take your stand because of your analysis and research.

Create — It is in this top level of the taxonomy, the highest level of critical thinking that you use, you use your unique creativity to move from another's information to your own unique display of learning. It can be said that you take your learning and share it in a way that labels it as your own. You use your creativity in a multitude of ways throughout your days. At times it is as simple as finding a new way to solve a frustrating problem; in other instances it is an amazing creation from within — a portrait, a novel, a song, a musical piece, or an invention.

Becoming aware of the levels of critical thinking allows you to focus on using the strategies to insure that you creatively plan as you move through your days. The opposing force in your brain is in the Limbic Area where the amygdala operates in a constant fashion searching all stress related items that may do harm to the individual. The purpose of "fight or flight" response is in your DNA. The way to reduce stress is to use your critical thinking brain. The more you use analysis/research, evaluation, and creativity the less power you give to the "reactive" brain" (the amygdala).

Qualities of Empowered Learners

As you begin your learning at in Academic Strategies for the Business Professional, it is important to identify the qualities of successful students (analysis) so you may identify your own, emulate others and choose (evaluation) to incorporate them into your life, and eventually make these qualities into your own (creativity).

There are a great number of qualities you can call to mind, and the more frequently you rehearse these qualities, styles, and strategies the more they become a part of you. Take time to look at each one listed here and add your own as well. Identify how each works to empower you as a learner. Envision each as a part of your personal identification. How do you apply it in your life and learning? How can each be used as a tool of success as you move along your educational journey?

Responsibility

Perhaps an easy way to define responsibility is that you know what you have to do and you do it. You do not make excuses or blame others; instead, you take charge and find ways to overcome obstacles and continue making progress. The goals you set are your own and you make them a priority in your life.

Self-motivation

Strong learners are motivated. They have a vision of the future, whether that is tomorrow or in 5 years. They consistently keep that vision in their critical thinking minds. They see the measurements of success with optimism and setbacks do not trigger the reactive brain, but instead inspire the critical thinking brain to focus on creative problem solving strategies. They put one foot in front of the other with consistency and a positive mind-set.

Self-management

Successful students are organized. They employ such tools as time management and critical thinking to manage stress and balance multiple responsibilities. They have a workplace, a calendar of study hours, and a stance that prioritizes their education. They monitor their grades carefully and use communication with instructors as an important tool.

Curiosity

Successful students are curious. Curiosity is a form of wonder. Wonder encourages analysis and research. This engages the critical thinking brain. Curious students are not content with just the information given but strive to discover more about the learning topic and to share findings with peers. They add to discussions by contributing ideas and insights that enhance the given information. They recognize enhanced knowledge allows for greater creative problem solving in future situations.

Independence

Successful students are independent. They do not need anyone to push them along in their choice to educate. They make choices based on goals they set. They can complete their responsibilities with pride. As independent learners, students also recognize when they need to reach for support from provided university or outside learning sources. First Term Experience is our source for coaching. Our Writing Center and Math Center assist in their

respective areas. Our instructors can also advise you in seeking support. Independent students do not procrastinate when they recognize the need to seek help.

Interdependence

Interdependence in successful students means working together. This brings peers, instructors, support, outside sources, and other “people” into their learning arena. They are team members, risk takers, problem solvers, quiet thinkers, brainstormers, and problem solvers. As they build relationships they are both networking and thriving in their own learning and the learning of others.

Self-Awareness

Successful students practice self-awareness throughout life and learning. They investigate things such as learning styles that are unique to them. They look for interesting assessments that allow them to see what their learning characteristics might be including their strengths and weaknesses. They look into things like their multiple intelligences, their personality identifiers; they even become acutely aware of when they see their reactive mind trying to run the show. They can stop, think, and then act using their critical thinking skills. Self-awareness also allows them to see through another’s eyes. They consider how the receivers their words perceive meaning and they work toward understanding and balance in all areas of life and learning.

Emotional Intelligence

Successful students are aware and in control of their emotional intelligence. Your emotional intelligence originates with the amygdala in the Limbic Area of the brain. The amygdala has the power to save lives in severe situations. It sends a multitude of messages through the brain to raise your respiration, your heart rate, to deliver blood to your extremities, to make you flee, attack, or sometimes even freeze. It takes the energy from your critical thinking to allow every other event to occur. This is all a good thing if you need to escape danger. It is not a good thing in your daily routines.

Emotional Intelligence means you are aware of your stress and work to reduce it by way of your critical thinking and creative problem- solving skills. Your emotional intelligence (the amygdala) can gather energy just like a freight train speeding out of control. If you do not take measures of self-awareness to stop it before that happens, you can experience intense rage or withdrawal. You lose your ability to think critically. Working with your emotional intelligence and keeping it in your control with the use of critical thinking will create strong strategies of success in your studies and life. The more you focus on the positive the less the amygdala plays a role in your daily life. Working with qualities such as self-belief, patience, kindness, caring, and sharing are just some of the ways to keep the critical thinking brain engaged and the amygdala quiet.

Sousa, D. A. (2006). *How the brain learns* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

II. Challenge Activity

Educause Quarterly offers great information to enhance your success as a student. As your challenge in Unit 1, to further enrich your personal development as a successful online student, please carefully read and reflect upon the following online article:

How Students Develop Online Learning Skills - 7 Tips from Successful Online Students
<http://er.educause.edu/articles/2007/1/how-students-develop-online-learning-skills>

Take time in Unit 1 to identify strategies that you find most helpful to your learning and thinking processes. Begin to use them over and over because through repetition you establish habits of success. Do not forget, you may always share your thoughts in the Virtual Office or Discussion Board.

III. Powerful Words for a Powerful Vocabulary – 7 words in 7 Days

Effective communication is not only an essential academic strategy; it is fast becoming one of the top skills employers are looking for as they screen potential employees. However, how do you become an effective communicator? The answer to this question is actually quite simple, yet it involves some serious commitment on your part. You have to practice and make a firm commitment to equipping yourself with the many different “tools” that you will need in order to express your ideas clearly and effectively in both written and spoken communication. This is where a powerful vocabulary can make a world of difference for you because words are the building blocks of communication. Therefore, the more words you are able to use, the more creative, convincing, and powerful you will be as a communicator. What if you could add just one new word to your vocabulary each day? Think about the progress you would make in a week, a month, or even an entire year.

Complete the vocabulary activities here <http://www.studymate.com?id=3fncLzYzh>

Vocabulary Enrichment Resources

Merriam-Webster's Word of the Day

<http://www.merriam-webster.com/word-of-the-day/>

Activity: Make your own flashcards: <http://quizlet.com/>

Unit 1 Vocabulary Words:

Pedagogue: Teacher or leader.

Acumen: Quickness of intellectual insight; keenness.

Inundate: Overload; cover completely.

Abate: Lessen; reduce; suppress.

Innocuous: Harmless; unlikely to offend or provoke.

Luminary: A person of eminence or brilliant achievement.

Propitious: Presenting favorable circumstances.

Writing Discussion Board: [See Academic Tools area of the course to access Academic Support.](#)

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